

U.S. Department of Education
2020 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [] Title I [] Charter [] Magnet[X] Choice

Name of Principal Ms. Patsy H. Patrick
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Cross Creek Early College High School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1200 Murchison Road Butler Building
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Fayetteville State NC Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 28301-4252

County Cumberland County

Telephone (910) 500-7551 Fax (910) 676-7712

Web site/URL http://ccechs.ccs.k12.nc.us/ E-mail PatsyPatrick@ccs.k12.nc.us

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Marvin Connelly Jr E-mail MarvinConnelly@ccs.k12.nc.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Cumberland County Schools Tel. (910) 678-2300

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mrs. Alicia Chisolm
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2020 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2014 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, or 2019.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2019-2020) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 52 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 18 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 17 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 87 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
 Suburban
 Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2019 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	24	44	68
10	24	43	67
11	24	47	71
12 or higher	30	38	68
Total Students	102	172	274

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 1.1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 4 % Asian
 - 49 % Black or African American
 - 16.4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 2.1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 16.1 % White
 - 11.3 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2018 - 2019 school year: ≤1%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	2
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	2
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	280
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	<.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	<1

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish, Punjabi, Arabic, Korean, German, and several African languages.

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %
2 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 61 %
 Total number students who qualify: 167

8. Students receiving special education services: 1 %
4 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>0</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>1</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>2</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>1</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 8
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	13
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	0
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	4
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 21:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	96%	98%	98%	96%	98%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2019.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	63
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	100%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

The mission of Cross Creek Early College High School is to provide a smaller academic environment that fosters growth and success to prepare all students for their future by developing relationships, responsibility, and respect through relevant and rigorous coursework.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

Perspective students submit an online application. The selection process is a randomized procedure ensuring a representation from every attendance zone within the district by assigning priorities outlined by the North Carolina State legislation.

PART III - SUMMARY

Cross Creek Early College High School (CCECHS) is an innovative public school located on the campus of Fayetteville State University (FSU), a designated Historically Black College and University (HBCU). CCECHS is one of seventeen high schools in the Cumberland County School district (CCS), an area that mirrors the county in size, 658 square miles. The district, fifth largest in North Carolina, has 50,880 students of which 13,430 are military-connected to Fort Bragg, the largest military installation, by population, in the United States. CCECHS prides itself on its 100 percent graduation rate, its 100 percent college acceptance rate, and its holistic approach preparing students for college, career, and life.

Cross Creek Early College High School opened during the 2005-2006 school year at Fayetteville State University. CCS mandates that all areas within the district are represented at CCECHS and to ensure equity, CCS provides bus transportation to and from campus to all students. Our student population composition is diverse: African-American students make up 49% of the student body, Hispanic and Latino students make up 16.4% and White students comprise 16.1% of our population. Asian students are represented at 4%, American Indian students make up 1% and Pacific Islander students comprise 2% of our student body. Students of blended race (two or more races) are 11% of our population. In regards to gender, our population is 62% female and 38% male. The majority of CCECHS students come from middle to lower income households. Sixty-one percent of our students are eligible for free and reduced lunch. Many of our students are first-generation college bound and some students have at least one parent with a college degree. Our school community is vast, given that all traditional high school communities in our district are represented at our school. This creates a multicultural presence within the school as many faiths and cultures coexist in our environment. Additionally, categories of consideration such as (1) first generation college-bound, (2) economically disadvantaged / at-risk , and (3) students who benefit from accelerated academic instruction provide all students the opportunity to be part of a successful and supportive program that leads to a high school diploma and 60 hours or greater of college credits.

Cross Creek Early College High School was created through the Gates Foundation, NC New Schools Project, NC Learn and Earn Early College Initiative, with direct partnership between Fayetteville State University and Cumberland County School District. CCECHS enrolls up to three hundred students and preserves founding philosophies of providing relevant and rigorous curriculum, social-emotional learning that encompasses tenets of respect, responsibility, and relationships. This enables students to earn college credit and be globally competent and competitive. To date, the school has earned many awards and distinctions.

Proudly, Cross Creek Early College High School received North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) report card grade of “A” since implementation, 2014-2019. CCECHS achieved a 100% graduation rate from 2012-2019 and 100% of those graduates were accepted into an accredited college. Beginning in 2010-2014, CCECHS was named one of four “Early College Learning Laboratory Model Schools,” serving over 400 educators in modeling best practices and innovative teaching practices.

Our merits require support. All students, 9th-12th, are enrolled in AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination), a college preparatory program. CCECHS teachers hold regularly scheduled tutoring sessions, Saturday school, academic clinics, ACT/SAT prep sessions, and the College-Prep AVID Core Curriculum (CPAC), an intensive, in-school support group for students who need academic support. To assist students in college courses, CCECHS students attend FSU Supplemental Instruction (SI) concentrating in writing, mathematics, foreign language, and social sciences.

To safeguard the success of the whole student, CCECHS employs social-emotional learning strategies through daily in-school “R-Time” opportunities that include character development, team-building, current events, book study each semester, and self-reflection. Additionally, CCECHS requires students to volunteer at least fifty hours per academic year. CCECHS provides many volunteering opportunities for students. The theme of “giving back” solidifies the sense of responsibility that permeates the school culture. Since 2016, students have volunteered an excess 33,734 hours.

To further student success, CCECHS uses a cadre system for faculty and staff. Each member belongs to the cadre that suits their strengths, thus ensuring commitment of purpose. Coupled with CCS professional development, CCECHS concentrates on advancement of equity in education and data deciphering to improve student success.

The strength of Cross Creek Early College High School lies in the foundational idea of respect for others and building relationships. Academic achievement, school spirit felt by students and families, commitment of purpose, and involvement in extracurricular activities create a vibrant school community which addresses students' needs in every facet of their academic, emotional, and social lives.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

1a. Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas

Cross Creek Early College High School employs a comprehensive course of study in accordance with state and local guidelines to provide students with enrollment both in their high school as well as college courses on the Fayetteville State University campus. The rigor of this structured approach permits students to complete the bulk of their high school curriculum by the conclusion of their sophomore year.

Beginning in ninth grade, students are enrolled almost exclusively in Honors-level classes. In conjunction with counselors, administrators, and classroom teachers, students are placed into an academic schematic which helps chart their later years and college courses. By the second semester of their freshman year, students are already taking sophomore level classes, such as English II Honors, Math III Honors, or Honors Biology. Additionally, freshmen students are enrolled in their first college class through the AVID and History programs. Students can complete their high school curricular requirements through their college classes where they receive both college and high school credits.

Student schedules are established in a four-by-four of ninety-minute blocks. Each academic day begins with a twenty-minute block called “R-Time.” R-Time is a period where students work on interpersonal skills and effective teaching takes place. Students explore challenges in life, such as what we decide to place value on or how to make good life choices, as well as supplement their academic needs through peer-tutoring.

The teachers at CCECHS are highly qualified, employ various assessments, and utilize structures to ensure student success. With the adoptions of electronic textbooks, teachers create instructional opportunities that can be achieved outside of the traditional classroom. Additionally, these digital platforms provide instantaneous feedback on individual content standards that can help inform instruction and remediation. It is because of the rigorous work and standards-based teaching and assessment that CCECHS has maintained an “A” rating on the NC State Report Card, as well as having additional recognition which explores college readiness and academic success for low-income students. These accomplishments would be impossible without the teachers utilizing project-based learning, early-intervention, direct and flipped instruction, and asynchronous instructional opportunities.

Cross Creek Early College High School is built around “The Five R’s”: Rigor, Respect, Relevance, Relationships, and Responsibility. These are the foundational blocks upon which instruction and directives are built. These guiding principles inform decisions about course content and how best to prepare students for collegiate success. The students of CCECHS gain preparation and experience with higher learning as they work toward the credits needed for a bachelor’s degree.

1b. Reading/English language arts

Students complete 4 units of English, each at the Honors level starting in 9th grade. English I and II are completed the first year, followed by English III the second year, and English IV the third year. By the time students are seniors they have been prepared to begin taking college level English courses. Each of these courses are aligned with the North Carolina English Language Arts (ELA) Standards that are designed to prepare all students for success in college and career by promoting literacy and critical thinking skills. The teachers address these strands via lesson planning and implementation of the Common Instructional Framework, or CIF. Additionally, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction’s Twelve Instructional Practices is utilized to ensure that English classrooms provide a balanced literacy foundation.

Teachers use data to drive instruction is evident in classrooms. Student data is derived from a number of sources, such as Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS), SchoolNet, formative assessments, and summative assessments. The text provides both low and high stakes testing that is aligned with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. Teachers, in turn, use this data to drive instruction, such as

configuring student groups, planning differentiated lessons, and tracking student progress. The myPerspectives program, adopted by Cumberland County Schools, provides the framework for lesson planning and activities. Teachers work collaboratively to effectively implement whole-class, small-group, and independent learning. The Pearson text, along with carefully chosen supplementary materials, allows students to comprehend work that steadily increases in complexity. Teachers use a variety of instructional practices to ensure mastery and college readiness. Resources such as whole-class discussions, such as Socratic seminars or philosophical chairs, are consistently utilized to stimulate thinking at a higher level. Teachers actively incorporate student-created, student-centered media, such as unit projects to introduce or close a unit. Students are regularly tasked with balancing in-class engagement and flipped lessons where the roles are reversed. As a result of a focus on critical thinking, innovation, and strategic questioning, students are better equipped for the transition to a college environment. All of the teachers within the department are well-versed in a variety of pedagogical practices to ensure daily engagement, rigorous coursework, high expectations, and, above all else, a sense of family and belief that every child has the ability to learn.

1c. Mathematics

High school math courses at Cross Creek Early College are based on Common Core standards. Students entering grade 9 are placed in Foundations first semester and Math I honors for the 2nd semester or Math II honors based on their 8th grade math class. Math is scheduled sequentially so students will be enrolled in Math I, II, III, and Pre-calculus all taught at the honors level. All students continue to take additional math courses at the university such as Math 123, 129, and beyond.

The school's core Math curriculum, enVision Integrated, is designed to guide students toward becoming self-directed independent learners. enVision Integrated embeds interactive digital math tools to help foster and support a blended learning environment. High Quality Math Instruction (HQMI) is demonstrated using a variety of methods and strategies. Students and teachers are engaged in daily conversations that facilitate meaningful discourse among students to build shared understanding of mathematical ideas. Strategic questioning is used to assess and advance students' reasoning skills in relating to important mathematical ideas and relationships. The Eight Mathematical Practices are implemented and enhanced through specific, meaningful tasks which allow students to explore different strategies, explain their thinking, see mathematics as relevant, struggle productively, and develop as problem-solvers. Adapted versions of Flipped Classrooms and Discovery/Investigation activities are used to engage students by front loading items that will be addressed throughout the week so that students begin a lesson with individual questions, research, and practice.

Data is used to drive instruction and decision making in a consistent and effective manner, especially when assessing students. Data from summative assessments, such as SchoolNet, District Benchmarks and NC Check-ins, is utilized by teachers to determine individual student mastery of the standards. Formative assessments, such as whiteboards, partner assignments and quizzes, stations, jigsaw, strategic questioning, error analysis, exit tickets, and student self-assessment, are used to monitor student learning on a daily basis. To help strengthen students' connections to the material, individual learning styles are incorporated through differentiation to provide inclusive assessments. Illustrative Math tasks are implemented to target the standards directly and provide feedback regarding the need for enrichment and/or reinforcement. Struggling students also have resources available both in and out of the classroom. Opportunities for test corrections, additional review/remediation, and course tutoring are available for all students. Tutoring is also facilitated each week by teachers and selected upperclassmen. To remain current with constantly evolving content, strategies, and resources, teachers continuously enhance their professional growth through reflection, professional development provided in house and district level, subject-area learning communities, and cross-curricular collaboration.

1d. Science

Cross Creek Early College High School require students complete three science courses: Honors Earth and Environmental Science, Honors Biology, and Honors Chemistry, which are based on the Next Generation Science standards. Students entering grade 9 are placed in Honors Earth Science, followed by Honors Biology (10th grade), and Honors Chemistry (11th grade). CCECHS students take additional college course

in Astronomy, Biology, and Chemistry. To better prepare them for the rigor of college science coursework, a unique collaboration with Fayetteville State University is maintained each semester. Labs and field trips to the FSU planetarium are extensions of the high school courses that allow for exposure to the principles of the American Chemical Association.

The Honors Earth and Environmental Science class emphasizes how the Earth's different systems operate focusing on the transferring of energy between each system, the study of matter, plate tectonics, the Earth and its surrounding solar system, as well as environmental awareness and resource availability for conservation efforts. Honors Biology enhances students' science processing skills and enhances understanding of macromolecules and cells, heredity, biological evolution and adaptation, interdependence of biotic factors, abiotic factors, energy, and the organization of living systems. Honors Chemistry continues the exploration of the structure of matter on an atomic level with emphasis on chemical reactivity. Each teacher integrates the concepts of college and career readiness by incorporating student-led inquiry, scaffolding, and differentiated learning. Through direct explicit instruction, hands on labs, peer collaboration, and project-based activities, students are engaged in collaborative learning using 21st century skills. Students are challenged through lessons, activities, projects, and formative/summative assessments to use strategy, innovation, critical thinking, and reflection to access higher level thinking skills. Student data from SchoolNet and District Benchmarks is analyzed in order to meet student demonstrated needs. Formative assessments, such as Quizizz, Kahoot, fist of five, whiteboards, exit tickets, and interactive notebooks are utilized to provide more attention to individual learning styles and methods of processing. To remain relevant in the changing world of science the teachers also attend professional development, subject-based learning communities, and cross-curricular collaboration.

1e. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement

Social Studies at CCECHS has significantly evolved since the program's genesis. Our current model includes a number of innovative components. Freshmen are enrolled in a yearlong Honors Civics & Economics. The class meets 45 minutes daily. Sophomores complete a World History Class online through NC Virtual Public Schools as well as two semesters of face-to-face college courses (HIST 211 and HIST 212), which are offered through a partnership with Fayetteville State University. This allows students to satisfy high school Social Studies requirements while earning college credits.

The Social Studies has employed a number of techniques to drive innovative instruction. The courses are implemented by using a variety of strategies and resources to ensure mastery of the following skills and concepts: constructing charts and graphs, interpreting perspectives, analyzing cause and effect, and evaluating the impact of the past on contemporary issues. Students are taught using digital platforms, class discussions, lecture, and small group collaborations. Through digital technology a number of games and simulations are used to give students experiential context while analysis of laws and societal issues allow for students to gain a deeper understanding of community and world perspectives. Focus on these skills enables students to engage critically with the content and it translates into college coursework.

Additionally, being situated on a college campus, CCECHS students have unique opportunities to be involved in civic/community engagement at the collegiate level. Two of the courses that our students take with a university professor couple the class curriculum with a wide-scale community service project. As part of the Introduction to Sustainability university course, our juniors work together with the professor to brainstorm meaningful topics to address for their project. Students then work collaboratively in groups to develop the scope and design of the project. Last year's junior class developed an extensive recycling project for the university. These students conducted research, created project boards, and gave oral presentations concerning the importance of recycling and how to separate items appropriately. The students set up and manned recycling receptacles across the campus and distributed information to university students and staff. This year, in their Ethics and Civic Engagement college course, our ninth graders developed a community project involving a local Boys and Girls Club of NC. This project involves the collection of critically needed personal care items and was embraced by the student body as a whole. Opportunities like these not only deepen and affirm our relationship with the university, but it gives our students a voice in issues that matter, challenging them to use critical thinking skills to consider viable solutions and implement them.

1f. For secondary schools:

Cross Creek Early College High School employs a comprehensive college and career readiness curriculum, Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), as a means of support. Taken as a high school elective each year, grades 9-12, AVID provides a system of support for educators and students that encourages college and career readiness and success. AVID strategies are incorporated in all classes as staff shares the responsibility of making routines habits of mind. Interwoven throughout all AVID classes is the Student-Led Instructional Conference Event (SLICE) that fundamentally promotes students to be empowered, responsible, and independent.

Freshmen attend Summer Bridge, a time for students to coalesce and learn fundamentals of early college. AVID I focuses on skills such as goal setting, organizing, and self-monitoring. Specific academic needs to be honed include improving study skills, technology usage, communication skills, research, and writing.

AVID II students take their first full-time college class providing practical versus theoretical experiences, expanding understanding of what “college ready” means and adjusting practices to meet college-level work. All sophomores take the Pre-ACT; results become the launch point for further action.

AVID III students balance high school and college courses. AVID III guides students towards researching colleges, choosing four year degree plans, and exploring college requirements. Students learn self-advocacy by developing rapport with professors. By intentional analysis of PreACT data, students cultivate goals associated with the ACT. Upperclassmen who lag academically will be placed in intensive in-school tutorials called College Prep Avid Core known as CPAC.

AVID IV seniors have completed high school courses and are fully immersed at the university. AVID IV’s online curriculum reinforces appropriate communication with professors, completion of college and scholarship applications, development of financial literacy, and further exploration of career and college readiness. Students learn how to effectively highlight academic and other personal accomplishments through development of resumes and "brag sheets" that are used when requesting letters of recommendation. AVID IV is the culmination of four years' work toward college readiness.

1g. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Spanish is the only language offered at Cross Creek. By the end of 10th grade, all students will have completed Spanish I and II as college prerequisites. Most students will complete Spanish 3 Honors as sophomores. Additionally, Spanish 4 Honors is offered to eligible students.

At the high school level, rigor, engagement and creativity are hallmarks of Spanish classes. The emphasis on communication and the fostering of interaction with the rest of the world aligns with the philosophical foundation of the state standards. Instruction focuses on students being able to use the Spanish language in real-world situations. To prepare students for cross cultural interaction, teachers incorporate multiple instructional strategies as well as digital tool integration. Student learning tasks often consist of elaborate rehearsals of situations encountered abroad. Other tasks measure students’ proficiency levels both verbally and in writing through the use of rubrics. Grammar structures and vocabulary are taught intentionally so that students can comprehend authentic sources such as Spanish-language news sites. One of the most exciting aspects of the courses for students is when language classes transcend physical boundaries. Students in Spanish classes at CCECHS have been fortunate to develop relationships with sister classes in Argentina, Peru and Spain. During the course, letters and videos are produced and exchanged which makes for a thoroughly enriching learning opportunity.

As juniors, students have the opportunity to enter the Spanish Minor program through the university. This collaboration with professors gives students the unique opportunity to pursue a minor in Spanish by completing 18 credit hours of upper-level coursework and the chance to obtain a Workplace Certificate of Proficiency by passing the associated tests. Students have experienced documented success in this program

which speaks to the strength of the language program at CCECHs.

Cross Creek students, like all students in North Carolina, must meet the graduation requirement of one high school credit in Health and Physical Education (HPE). Although Health and PE is not offered as a high school course through CCECHS, students are able to satisfy that graduation requirement through an equivalent university level Health and PE course through Fayetteville State University. This course was designed specifically for early college students and only early college students are permitted to enroll. The university professors cover the same content and curriculum as the HPE teachers at traditional high schools would cover, if not more. Students overwhelmingly enjoy this course and the positive feedback from the professors reflects a productive, effective, partnership. They are constantly impressed with the maturity and insight the students display in class discussions as well as the quality of their work on projects and presentations. A perk that students enjoy in this course is the fact that the course is taught by professors of health education who invite football, basketball, and other FSU athletic coaching staff to collaborate on the physical education component. The students enjoy this interaction as many of them are athletes at their home schools in the district. Most importantly, the students receive the three college credits the course is worth as well as the one credit requirement for high school graduation. The Health and Physical Education course provision is just one example of how partnerships between Cross Creek ECHS and FSU meet the needs of everyone involved.

CCECHS students partake of a thorough selection of courses in the arts, technology, philosophy, and social sciences. Being an Early College partnered with a 4-year liberal arts university provides exposure to elective courses that are not traditionally offered at the high school level. Additionally, these course electives make up a substantial portion of the students' chosen degree plans. This creates ample opportunities for exploration while students also acquire college credits.

At CCECHS, Character Education is a focal point of the program and is at the basis of our foundational concepts. The five "R's" on which daily R-time is based (Responsibility, Relationship, Respect, Relevance, Rigor) is largely character-based. The principal, school counselor, and each teacher work to bring those concepts to the forefront so they can be reflected in student behavior. AVID curriculum strenuously supports character education and social emotional learning with its focus on classroom strategies and activities promoting reflection, tolerance, empathy, and respect. In this manner, character education is not a singular concept that belongs to the counselor, but rather a foundational aspect embraced by the staff as a whole.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

Teachers and staff are extremely responsive in meeting the needs of students who are performing below grade level. There are several appropriate and effective interventions utilized, some in isolation, some in concert with others depending on the individual student and the presenting need. One strategy that is always used is the availability of 1:1 and small group tutoring by the classroom teacher. Each teacher maintains a weekly tutoring schedule where more individualized help is offered. Investing this time in student learning in a small-group or one-to-one atmosphere often results in increased confidence and understanding on behalf of the student, leading to stronger academic performance. In addition to tutoring with teachers, struggling students are also brought to the attention of the school counselor who frequently pairs them with older students for tutoring sessions during the school day. This tutoring network is set up and maintained by the counselor and all student-tutors are vetted carefully for the program. This is a preferable option for students with transportation challenges and for whom staying after school is not a feasible option. An additional benefit of the program is that the tutoring pairing often grows into a meaningful mentor-mentee relationship that morphs into a support system for the student.

Partnering with parents is another essential strategy. Teachers reach out to parents whenever academic concerns arise. Targeted conference weeks are scheduled on the school calendar each semester. During those weeks, the school-wide goal is to meet with the parent of every student who is performing below standard. These conferences not only detail student progress, but also serve to problem-solve the academic

concerns presented by all parties. The student is recognized as the ‘expert’ regarding personal academic progress and is more apt to follow through with an individualized plan when academic success is treated as a responsibility rather than an obligation.

3b. Students performing above grade level

Students performing above grade-level are offered specialized academic opportunities to keep them engaged and intellectually stimulated. Several online platforms are available to CCECHS (via both the school district and the state) that offer rigorous and compelling coursework for students who are further ahead and need their schedules enriched and supplemented. These platforms are easily accessible and include the North Carolina Virtual Public School platform, Connexus, and Teleconferencing options. Being a small school with limited scheduling options, CCECHS has found these virtual options to be an efficient way to address the needs of students who are working above grade level and have advanced themselves beyond their classmates.

Being enrolled in an online class does not in any way isolate the students taking them; in fact, it is quite the opposite. These students are under the guidance of, and in physical sight of, selected teachers and staff members who monitor the students’ progress and work performance daily and interact with the virtual instructors. Teachers who are on planning periods, the school counselor, and the school principal are all individuals who work in concert to maintain structure for these virtual assignments in addition to keeping students accountable for their work. Once these students reach the eleventh grade, the online options on their schedules are replaced with college credit offerings through the partnership with the university. During this time, students’ quest for additional academic rigor is more than satisfied by the content and expectations of the college courses that they choose, with assistance, for their selected degree plan. Students who can handle the additional work and have demonstrated the commitment needed to be successful generally carry schedules higher in credit hours and intensity.

3c. Special education

The premise of an early college program is that all participating students will be immersed into the unique academic challenges and rigor that the program presents. The program can be successfully navigated by students of all ability levels, to include those receiving services in special education. This is possible because of the built-in supports that come tailor-made with early college program structure as well as the dedication and attention of the teachers and staff.

By design, the CCECHS program honors small class-sizes which creates the foundation for closer student-teacher relationships and collaboration amongst class members. The teachers become acutely aware of students’ strengths and ability levels and can create ways to reach each one. The classroom environment is one where collaboration and exchange of ideas can take place freely and with encouragement and direction from the teacher. This is an ideal learning environment for all students, and especially those with learning challenges.

With the adoption of the AVID program and its focus on organization, critical thinking, teamwork, and reading and writing skills, teachers and staff are honing in on the areas that can be problematic for students with special learning needs. The AVID platform drives instruction and interaction, and provides guidance and direction for students who may be deficient in the core skills areas while also boosting academically stronger students to the next level. This emphasis on individual needs is critical to student achievement for students following an IEP or a 504 plan with specialized learning goals.

Another area of support for special education students is that post-graduation options relating to college are constantly presented. Students are persistently encouraged to consider a variety of four-year degree programs reinforcing the idea that a college degree is attainable.

3d. ELLs, if a special program or intervention is offered

Cross Creek Early College has a small student population of English as a Second Language Learner. Our district provides screening as well as training for CCECHS staff to meet the needs of ELL students. Teachers provide differentiated instruction, tutoring, peer pairing, and on-going communication with the school counselor and ELL teacher so students can attain English proficiency and develop high levels of academic achievement to meet the State academic standards.

3e. Other populations (e.g., migrant), if a special program or intervention is offered

Being adjacent to Ft. Bragg, one of the largest Army bases in the nation, military-connected students make up nearly 45% of Cross Creek's student population. These students can sometimes be susceptible to classroom focus and engagement issues stemming from common stressors of the military culture to include frequent relocation and deployment of one or both parents/guardians. With support in place by the school district such as professional development sessions and the presence of a military liaison who serves as a conduit between military families and schools, our staff is cognizant of the needs of this special population. We strive to display understanding and flexibility with students and parents. The school counselor works closely with these families and the teachers when concerns or questions arise that have the potential to impact a student's academic success.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Cross Creek Early College High School is dedicated to providing an academically rich and emotionally healthy environment in which our students can thrive. The value placed on student, parent, community, and staff commitment is highly reflected in the school's consistent efforts to provide an intellectually stimulating environment that promotes learning, sparks creativity, and encourages positive relationships. This is cultivated by creating and maintaining a family atmosphere within the building where all teachers eventually have the opportunity to work with each student in some capacity.

During their ninth and tenth grade years, students belong to an "R-Time" class at the beginning of each day where teachers and students conduct book studies on relevant topics focusing on strategies for success in both school and life. This emphasis on character education and social-emotional growth is an important part of balancing out the rigor of the early college advanced curriculum. One day a week, R-time converts to "Club Day" where these students have the opportunity to enjoy activities of their choosing with a different set of peers in various classrooms. This promotes social interaction among students with like interests.

Student-Led Instructional conferences, (SLICE) are big events held twice a year that bring out both parents and their students to dialogue about each student's successes. SLICE is an AVID-based event and students are proud to present to their parents the details of their accomplishments through a digital binder.

As a school-wide initiative, student accomplishments (A/B Honor Roll, Students of the Month, community awards) as well as birthdays, are celebrated during scheduled grade level class meetings. Students look forward to and feel pride with these types of recognition events. 'Spirit Nights' are scheduled with local restaurants in different parts of the county not only as a fundraising effort, but primarily to give students, staff, and parents a chance to fellowship, as well as support the idea of school unity.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Providing opportunities for community and parent commitment to CCECHS is an ongoing process guided by the School Improvement Team (SIT) through cadres, Parent-Teacher Association (Cross Creek PTA), and CCECHS Student Government Association (CCECHS SGA). The most successful and innovative program, a signature element of CCECHS, is the Student-led Instructional Conferencing Event (SLICE), held each semester for 9th and 10th and second semester for 11th and 12th graders. SLICE provides students with the opportunity to share their experiences, goals, and progress with parents. SLICE is the culmination of months of work by the student who creates an online portfolio of exemplars and reflections, presented and defended to parents at SLICE. In a constructive atmosphere, teachers facilitate and students lead. SLICE is designed to motivate students to take ownership of their learning, to encourage self-efficacy, and to provide students and parents many opportunities to communicate, in their first language, as equal partners about student achievement. The evening concludes with parents writing an encouraging note to their child for distribution the next day, acknowledging the hard work and effort by the student. Because it is a school-wide expectation, one hundred percent parent/family participation is common.

Other activities include the FSU/CCECHS Forum Night in which secondary/post-secondary stakeholders gather to review practices, gain understanding, and strengthen academic relationships between university and high school at all levels. The Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) sponsors cultural events for students to enjoy. The CCECHS SGA extends invitations to family members for special events like the Fall Festival. Further, CCECHS SGA participates annually with organizations like Victory Junction and prides itself on displaying community leadership through consistent good works.

Information distribution between home and school include the principal's weekly call, numerous forms of social media, Google Classroom announcements, and the school's website. Teachers make contact through parent's preferred method, phone or email, with timely "needs improvement" information or "good news." Progress reports and report cards are provided on a regular schedule with parent acknowledgement

signatures returned to school. Students are also required to complete 200 hours of volunteer community service. Students learn the value of engaging in their community, and also find that this facet of their school life can prove helpful as they apply for universities and scholarships. The manifestation of the underlying goal of engaging students, families, and the community presents itself in a variety of ways through the students, including volunteer work in hospitals, assistance in elementary schools, collection and distribution at food banks, and assistance at community holiday events. Leaders will often emerge from the student body as the need to make a difference in the community has started from a focus on student engagement in the classroom.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

The bedrock of the professional culture is the commitment to relationships. Class sizes are manageable enough that teachers are able to develop a rapport with all of their students. The impact of these relationships cannot be understated. As students become acclimated to the expectations and interactions, the school culture transcends above traditional student-teacher interaction. Cross Creek Early College High School offers a professional environment in which teachers are delivering quality instruction and facilitating meaningful experiences. Students are strategizing, communicating, and having professional conversations whether they are involved in a Socratic Seminar or having a conversation with an instructor in which they must self-advocate.

The staff of Cross Creek have a broad range of experience. More than seventy-five percent of the teachers have greater than five years of experience, and more than half have led professional development at the district level or beyond. The school administration has taken note of the experience level, and has endeavored to find professional development that veteran teachers might find impactful. This has included cooperative book studies, blogging, and guest presentations. As the curriculum is ever-changing, so is the effort to provide instructors with new techniques to engage students. Professional development is ongoing to ensure CCECHS continues to be innovative in our teaching, thinking, and learning for students. CCECHS teachers are engaged in professional development to include study visits to other early colleges for best practices to improve teaching and learning. It is through collaboration, sharing best practices, leading professional development, and innovative thinking that “college begins here” to better prepare students for success in college, career, and life.

Cross Creek Early College has a history as a model school, serving in this professional capacity for five years under the North Carolina New Schools Project. Routinely, schools from North Carolina visit to observe classrooms and interact with the students and staff to get a firsthand look at the implementation and execution of innovative teaching and learning. The experience of being a model school serves to strengthen the established culture of Cross Creek Early College as a highly functioning and effective program.

4. School Leadership:

The philosophy and structure for leadership at Cross Creek Early College is grounded in our tag line “College Begins Here” and the “5 R’s”. Relationships: building a foundation that fosters growth, success, and accomplishments throughout life. Responsibility: taking ownership of one’s actions regardless of the consequences. Relevance: linking classroom experiences to real world applications to enhance understanding. Respect: appreciating the similarities and differences between one’s self and others, and recognizing the importance of valuing one’s surroundings. Rigor: incorporating high expectations for all students in all classes. The 5 R’s are the driving force for the CCECHS mission and vision, which teachers use to build great teaching and learning that supports student achievement. While the organizational aspects yield tangible results, no program can reach its potential without a whole group effort and a collective belief in the system as a whole. In recognizing that attitude reflects leadership, the principal strives to encourage growth in staff members by providing opportunities for professional enhancement through distributive leadership. Every staff member at CCECHS serves on a leadership cadre. Cadres meet regularly and are focused on improving student achievement, innovative teaching practices, incorporating technology and college readiness. It is through the cadres that teachers are tasked with leading through change, reinforcement, and development. Another group that shares in the decision making is the School Improvement Team who meet monthly with a focus on academic growth, community engagement,

budgeting, and professional development.

The principal does not just monitor teacher-student interaction. Prior to the administration of the ACT, each junior meets individually with the principal to review PreACT data, ACT projections, and goals for the upcoming semester. Interacting with students digitally through the use of Google Classroom is a daily occurrence by the CCECHS administrative team. The principal is not viewed as simply a “figurehead,” but as one of many components of the entire program. Students wishing to lead service projects meet with the administrative team who provides hands on support whether the project is approved or not. The principal is involved in every classroom, activity, and event, even participating in a student-centered event to raise money for a local charity that culminated in receiving a pie in the face in front of the student body. Showing that, as a school leader, the investment is also personal sends a strong message throughout the school that empowers both staff and students to accept and create opportunities for leadership as well.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

If the academic success of Cross Creek Early College High School could be distilled down to one practice, that practice would most likely be the emphasis on relationships. In an era that has accentuated the value of collaboration, CCECHS understands the necessity of sound working relationships between staff and students. It is not a seamless process as there are challenges when working with a diverse group of people from various backgrounds with a range of life experiences and opinions. With work and dedication, positive relationships are built and maintained in the most difficult situations. Rapport is the key to academic success at CCECHS.

For students, it begins in Summer Bridge, an orientation day for the incoming 9th graders. Freshmen meet staff, rising seniors and Student Government leaders, all who have volunteered to help the new students become acclimated. While it is important for the freshmen to learn where the cafeteria is and what the academic expectations are, of equal value is the visible practice of the student leaders who demonstrate respect and kindness out of a sense of responsibility. They have learned to recognize the impact of these characteristics as they engage teachers, professors, employers, the community, and their peers. Relationships begin.

Over the course of a school year, as students gain more confidence, they begin to exchange their middle school coping mechanisms for the skills and behaviors that will better serve them in the professional environment of a university campus. They have received guidance and helpful strategies from the school counselor. Teachers and staff have helped them to make connections between academics and everyday life. By the time they become upperclassmen, students have progressed academically while developing the affective knowledge and social skills to meet and correspond with professors, locate and participate in volunteer opportunities, and represent the school in diverse events and programs such as Science Olympiad, Student Government Conferences, and North Carolina Governor's School. They have learned how to take ownership of their academic decision making and have seen the collaborative efforts between the school and parents to help students achieve their goals. Relationships are cultivated.

When seniors graduate, there is a flood of emotions as well as a sense of accomplishment. Though students are now moving on to the next phase of their educational journey, they are more than a memory as many of them still communicate with staff members and administration to share their experiences at the full time college level. Even though they have completed the high school academic journey, and many have done so with excellent academic achievements, they are still compelled to maintain the connection they have with CCECHS. Relationships are valued.

Students invariably come to CCECHS to better their chances of going to college or, in some instances, to even have a chance at all. They want to be as prepared as possible. They come from diverse backgrounds, with different goals, and a variety of cultural values. Nonetheless, students share a common dream of attending and graduating college, and entering into a satisfying career field. Whichever path they choose, they will need the skills to develop and sustain relationships. These affective "soft skills" are addressed with little fanfare, but they are as vital a component to academic success as any subject area content provided at CCECHS.